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ALGORITHMIC CULTURE AND THE NEW HUMAN: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF DIGITALCIVILIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed not only communication practices but also the cultural conditions through which human beings perceive reality, construct identity, establish social relations, and participate in collective life. This article examines the emergence of algorithmic culture as a defining feature of contemporary digital civilization. Moving beyond a purely technical understanding of algorithms, the study argues that algorithmic systems have become cultural agents that organize visibility, relevance, preference, memory, social recognition, and symbolic value. Drawing on digital anthropology, media theory, cultural sociology, and critical algorithm studies, the article analyzes how recommendation systems, artificial intelligence, social media platforms, search engines, predictive analytics, and data-driven infrastructures increasingly shape everyday experience. The central argument of the article is that algorithms no longer function merely as computational tools operating behind digital interfaces. They now participate in the production of culture by influencing what individuals see, desire, believe, consume, remember, and value. This transformation produces what the article conceptualizes as the algorithmic human: a subject whose identity, habits, emotions, choices, and social relations are continuously negotiated through interaction with intelligent digital systems. The algorithmic human is not detached from traditional culture; rather, traditional cultural belonging is increasingly experienced through computational mediation. The article further argues that digital civilization requires anthropology to expand its analytical field. Culture can no longer be studied only through physical communities, kinship systems, rituals, institutions, and symbolic exchanges. It must also be examined through platforms, codes, interfaces, databases, and algorithmic architectures. The study concludes that algorithms should be understood as emerging cultural institutions capable of shaping social norms, symbolic meanings, collective behavior, and future forms of human existence.

Keywords: algorithmic culture, digital anthropology, artificial intelligence, digital civilization, algorithmic human, cultural transformation, digital society, identity

1. INTRODUCTION

Anthropology has traditionally defined the human being through culture. From kinship systems and religious rituals to symbolic communication, economic exchange, moral order, myth, language, and collective memory, culture has been understood as the primary field in which human societies produce meaning. Classical anthropology approached culture as a system of symbols, practices, norms, institutions, and narratives through which communities organize social life. In this sense, culture was never merely a collection of habits; it was the interpretive structure that made human

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existence meaningful.

Clifford Geertz's influential definition of culture as webs of significance created and interpreted by human beings remains central to this discussion (Geertz, 1973). Yet the twenty-first century has introduced a profound transformation into these webs of significance. The expansion of artificial intelligence, algorithmic decision-making, social media platforms, search engines, recommendation systems, and predictive technologies has produced a new cultural environment in which human experience is increasingly mediated by computational systems.

Culture is no longer generated only through face-to-face interaction, family transmission, religious education, national institutions, or local communities. It is also shaped by digital infrastructures that organize attention, visibility, preference, memory, and social value. This development corresponds to broader transformations in the network society, where information flows have become central to social organization, institutional power, and everyday life (Castells, 2010).

Today, billions of individuals encounter algorithmic systems in ordinary and repetitive ways. They wake up and check notifications. They allow navigation applications to organize movement. They receive personalized news feeds. They select films, music, books, products, restaurants, political content, and even potential partners through algorithmic recommendation. They are evaluated by systems that predict behavior, measure performance, rank visibility, and classify identity. These interactions are often experienced as ordinary conveniences. Yet anthropologically, they represent a major transformation in the production of culture.

The central question of this article is therefore as follows: can algorithms be understood as cultural actors?

This article argues that they can. Algorithms should not be regarded only as technical procedures or mathematical operations. In contemporary digital civilization, they operate as cultural agents because they participate in the organization of meaning. They determine what becomes visible and invisible, what appears relevant or irrelevant, what becomes popular or marginal, what is remembered or forgotten, and what is socially rewarded or ignored. In doing so, algorithms increasingly shape the cultural field in which human beings construct identity and belonging.

The article develops this argument through the concept of the algorithmic human. This concept refers to the contemporary subject whose daily life, preferences, emotional rhythms, symbolic attachments, and social interactions are continuously shaped through engagement with algorithmic systems. The algorithmic human is not a post-human figure in the sense of abandoning biological, emotional, or cultural existence. Rather, the algorithmic human is a culturally mediated subject whose experience of the world is increasingly filtered, ranked, predicted, and personalized by digital systems.

This transformation requires anthropology to reconsider several of its foundational categories. Agency can no longer be attributed only to human beings and institutions. Ritual can no longer be limited to sacred or communal ceremonies. Identity can no longer be analyzed only through family, class, gender, nation, ethnicity, religion, or locality. Socialization can no longer be understood only through interpersonal relations. Community can no longer be restricted to physical co-presence. Digital infrastructures now function as cultural environments in which human meanings are produced, circulated, and stabilized.

The purpose of this article is not to defend technological determinism. Algorithms do not act independently of human design, corporate power, political economy, or social context. They are produced by institutions, engineers, markets, ideologies, and cultural assumptions. Yet once embedded into everyday life, they acquire a form of practical agency. They influence human perception and behavior not because they possess consciousness, but because they structure the conditions under which culture is encountered.

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The article proceeds in six parts. First, it outlines the theoretical background of algorithmic culture. Second, it defines the concept of the algorithmic human. Third, it examines digital rituals as new repetitive symbolic practices of contemporary life. Fourth, it analyzes algorithms as invisible cultural institutions. Fifth, it discusses the political economy of algorithmic culture. Finally, it evaluates the implications of these transformations for anthropology and the study of digital civilization.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CULTURE, MEDIATION, AND ALGORITHMIC POWER

Culture has long been one of the most contested concepts in the human sciences. For Geertz (1973), culture is a web of meanings that human beings themselves have spun. Anthropology, in this view, is not an experimental science in search of universal laws but an interpretive science in search of meaning. This definition remains crucial for understanding digital civilization because algorithmic environments now participate in the weaving of those webs of meaning.

The digital age does not abolish culture. It reorganizes the conditions through which culture is produced, distributed, and interpreted. The rise of networked communication, as Castells (2010) argues, transformed modern society into a network society in which information flows became central to power, economy, and social organization. Later approaches in media studies and digital sociology emphasized that media technologies do not simply transmit content; they construct social reality by shaping the forms of communication available to society (Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

Digital anthropology extends this argument further by insisting that the digital is not separate from the human. Horst and Miller's edited work on digital anthropology emphasizes that digital technologies must be examined as part of ordinary social life, not as artificial layers detached from culture (Horst & Miller, 2012). Miller and Horst (2012) further argue that the digital should be studied through its capacity to become ordinary, embedded, and culturally meaningful. Digital environments are lived spaces. They are places where people form relationships, express identity, experience intimacy, perform status, produce memory, and negotiate belonging.

Earlier digital ethnographies also demonstrated that virtual environments are not secondary or unreal spaces but socially meaningful fields in which identity, community, and cultural practice are produced (Boellstorff, 2008). This insight is essential for the present article because algorithmic culture does not exist outside everyday life. It is embedded within the routines, emotions, expectations, and symbolic exchanges of contemporary societies.

Algorithmic culture emerges at the intersection of these transformations. Striphas (2015) uses the term algorithmic culture to describe the ways in which computational processes increasingly participate in the sorting, classification, recommendation, and evaluation of cultural goods. In a similar direction, Seaver (2017) argues that algorithms should be studied not only as technical objects but as cultural objects embedded in social practices, institutional arrangements, and interpretive frameworks. Algorithms are not culturally empty; they are designed, trained, maintained, interpreted, feared, trusted, resisted, and normalized.

This theoretical shift is essential. If algorithms are approached only as technical mechanisms, their cultural role remains invisible. Yet their influence is not limited to calculation. They shape what people encounter and how they encounter it. A search engine does not merely retrieve information; it orders knowledge. A recommendation system does not merely suggest entertainment; it shapes taste. A social media feed does not merely display content; it organizes social reality according to visibility, engagement, and affective intensity. A predictive system does not merely forecast behavior; it classifies individuals into categories that may affect future opportunities.

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Gillespie (2014) emphasizes that algorithms are significant because they help determine public relevance. They decide, through computational procedures, what should appear first, what should circulate widely, and what should remain obscure. This is a cultural function because visibility is never neutral. What becomes visible becomes meaningful. What becomes repeatedly visible becomes normal. What becomes algorithmically rewarded becomes desirable.

Algorithmic culture may also be interpreted as a new stage in global cultural flows. Appadurai (1996) showed that modern cultural life is shaped by the circulation of images, technologies, capital, people, and ideologies across borders. Digital platforms accelerate and algorithmically organize these flows. Images, desires, narratives, styles, political emotions, and symbolic forms now circulate through infrastructures that select, prioritize, and personalize them. Global culture therefore no longer moves only through migration, media, and markets; it also moves through recommendation systems and platform architectures.

From an anthropological perspective, this means that algorithms increasingly operate as mediators of symbolic order. They do not simply process data after culture has already been produced. They intervene in the production of culture itself. They shape collective attention, emotional climates, aesthetic preferences, consumption patterns, political polarization, moral judgment, and even the categories through which people understand themselves.

The theoretical framework of this article therefore rests on three assumptions. First, culture is a system of meaning produced through social practice. Second, digital infrastructures have become major environments of cultural production. Third, algorithms function within these environments as mediating agents that organize visibility, value, and identity. On this basis, the article proposes the concept of the algorithmic human as a necessary category for understanding contemporary digital civilization.

3. METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

This article is designed as a conceptual and theoretical study. It does not present fieldwork findings based on interviews, participant observation, or quantitative data. Instead, it develops an anthropological interpretation of algorithmic culture by synthesizing literature from digital anthropology, media studies, cultural sociology, and critical algorithm studies.

The methodological position of the article is interpretive. It treats algorithms not only as technical systems but as cultural formations. This means that the article analyzes their role in meaning-making, identity construction, ritualized behavior, institutional authority, and social reproduction. Such an approach is consistent with anthropological traditions that examine culture as lived practice and symbolic order.

The study is also interdisciplinary. Algorithmic culture cannot be adequately understood through a single disciplinary framework. Anthropology provides the conceptual tools for examining ritual, identity, symbolic meaning, and cultural transmission. Media studies explains the mediation of social reality through communication technologies. Sociology contributes to the analysis of institutions, power, and social organization. Critical data studies and algorithm studies reveal how computational systems classify, predict, and govern individuals.

The aim of this methodological synthesis is not to produce a universal theory of all digital societies. Rather, it is to identify a major cultural transformation: the increasing participation of algorithmic systems in the organization of human experience. The article therefore uses theoretical analysis as a way to clarify a contemporary civilizational condition.

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4. FROM BIOLOGICAL HUMAN TO ALGORITHMIC HUMAN

Human history can be read as a series of transformations in the relationship between human beings, tools, and culture. Agricultural civilization reorganized social life around land, settlement, food production, and property. Industrial civilization transformed labor, time, production, class, and urban life. Information society reorganized communication, knowledge, and global connectivity. Digital civilization, however, introduces a different kind of transformation: the algorithmic organization of everyday existence.

Earlier technologies extended human capacity. The wheel extended movement. Writing extended memory. The printing press extended communication. Industrial machines extended production. Broadcast media extended public imagination. Digital algorithms, by contrast, do not merely extend human ability; they increasingly participate in selection, evaluation, prediction, and decision-making. They do not only help humans act. They help determine the field of possible action.

This distinction is anthropologically significant. A person using a hammer remains the primary agent of action. A person using a search engine, social media platform, recommendation system, or artificial intelligence assistant enters a more complex relation. The system does not simply wait for instruction. It suggests, ranks, filters, recommends, reminds, predicts, and sometimes corrects. It learns from behavior and then reorganizes future possibilities based on that behavior.

The algorithmic human emerges within this feedback loop.

The algorithmic human is the subject of digital civilization whose habits, desires, preferences, and self-understanding are continuously negotiated through algorithmic mediation. This does not mean that the person becomes a machine. Nor does it mean that human agency disappears. Rather, it means that human agency increasingly operates inside computationally structured environments.

Identity, for example, is no longer constructed only through family, religion, education, gender, class, nation, or profession. It is also constructed through profiles, feeds, search histories, recommendation patterns, biometric data, platform metrics, and algorithmic classifications. The individual becomes visible to others through digital traces. At the same time, the individual becomes visible to oneself through datafied reflections: likes, views, shares, followers, engagement rates, memories, playlists, rankings, and personalized recommendations.

This produces a new form of selfhood. The modern individual once asked, “Who am I?” The algorithmic human increasingly asks, often unconsciously, “How am I seen?” “What does the system recommend to me?” “Why did this appear on my screen?” “Why did my post receive attention?” “Why was I ignored?” “What does my data say about me?”

These questions reveal that identity is no longer purely introspective or social; it is also infrastructural. The self is shaped through continuous interaction with systems that classify and respond to behavior. Cheney-Lippold (2017) argues that algorithmic classifications create data-based identities that may not correspond to how individuals understand themselves. This is one of the defining paradoxes of the algorithmic human: the subject becomes known by systems in ways that may remain invisible to the subject.

The algorithmic human also experiences culture through personalization. In traditional mass media, large populations encountered the same newspapers, television programs, national events, and public narratives. In algorithmic culture, each individual increasingly inhabits a personalized cultural environment. Two people may live in the same city, speak the same language, belong to the same nation, and yet inhabit radically different informational worlds. Their realities are curated through different feeds, recommendations, communities, influencers, and ideological clusters.

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This personalization transforms the anthropological meaning of common culture. Shared symbolic worlds become fragmented into algorithmically organized micro-worlds. Collective memory becomes platform-dependent. Public debate becomes feed-dependent. Taste becomes recommendation-dependent. Social recognition becomes metric-dependent.

The algorithmic human is therefore not merely a user of technology. The algorithmic human is a cultural subject formed within systems that observe, classify, predict, and influence behavior. This subject remains human, emotional, historical, and social; however, the conditions of human experience are increasingly reorganized through computational mediation.

5. ALGORITHMIC RITUALS AND EVERYDAY DIGITAL PRACTICE

Ritual has always been a central concern of anthropology. Rituals are repetitive symbolic practices through which communities produce meaning, reinforce belonging, mark transitions, express values, and stabilize social order. Traditionally, rituals were associated with religion, kinship, life-cycle ceremonies, festivals, mourning, sacrifice, initiation, and collective memory. Digital civilization has not eliminated ritual. It has generated new ritual forms.

Contemporary life is filled with algorithmic rituals. Many people begin the morning by checking their phones before speaking to another person. Notifications structure attention. Social media platforms mark birthdays. Travel becomes culturally incomplete without photographic documentation and online sharing. Meals are photographed before being eaten. Personal achievements become posts. Mourning becomes public tribute. Political anger becomes performative participation. Romantic relationships become visible through digital confirmation. Even silence becomes meaningful when a message is seen but not answered.

These practices are not random. They are repetitive, symbolic, socially recognized, and emotionally charged. They produce belonging within digital communities. They also establish norms. To forget a birthday notification may be interpreted as indifference. To avoid posting about a major event may be seen as secrecy. To receive no engagement may produce feelings of exclusion. To be shared by others may produce validation.

The difference between traditional ritual and algorithmic ritual lies in the role of infrastructure. Traditional rituals were often coordinated by religious authorities, elders, families, local communities, or state institutions. Algorithmic rituals are coordinated by platforms. Their timing, visibility, reward systems, and emotional intensity are shaped by algorithmic design.

The “like” button is not merely a technical feature. It is a symbolic gesture. It communicates recognition, approval, solidarity, attraction, politeness, irony, or obligation depending on context. The “share” function is not merely distribution; it is participation in cultural circulation. The “story” is not merely visual content; it is a temporary ritual of presence. The “notification” is not merely information; it is a call to re-enter the digital social field.

Social media platforms therefore operate not merely as channels of communication but as connective infrastructures that normalize particular forms of interaction, visibility, and social exchange (van Dijck, 2013). These infrastructures produce cultural habits by making some actions easy, some actions desirable, and some actions almost compulsory. Platform design becomes ritual design.

In this sense, algorithmic culture produces a new ritual economy of attention. Individuals participate in digital rituals not only to communicate but also to remain socially visible. Visibility becomes a form of existence. To be seen is to be socially confirmed. To disappear from algorithmic circulation is to risk symbolic absence.

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This is particularly important for anthropology because rituals reveal the moral structure of a society. Algorithmic rituals show that contemporary digital civilization values immediacy, visibility, responsiveness, emotional expressiveness, and measurable recognition. The algorithmic human learns these values through repetition. Over time, platform behavior becomes embodied habit.

Thus, digital rituals are not superficial. They are central to the cultural production of contemporary subjectivity.

6. ALGORITHMS AS INVISIBLE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

One of the central arguments of this article is that algorithms now perform functions historically associated with cultural institutions. Institutions are stable structures that organize social behavior, transmit values, regulate norms, and produce authority. Families, religions, schools, states, markets, and media organizations have traditionally served these functions. In digital civilization, algorithmic systems increasingly perform similar roles.

Families have historically transmitted values and norms. Today, platforms also participate in this transmission by shaping what young people see, imitate, admire, and desire. Religious institutions have historically provided moral frameworks. Today, digital platforms regulate moral visibility by amplifying certain forms of outrage, compassion, shame, solidarity, or condemnation. Schools have historically organized access to knowledge. Today, search engines, video platforms, and artificial intelligence systems increasingly shape how individuals learn. Media institutions have historically determined public agendas. Today, algorithmic feeds decide which topics become visible, viral, or forgotten.

This does not mean that algorithms have replaced traditional institutions entirely. Rather, they now operate alongside them and often within them. A family may still teach values, but children encounter competing values through digital platforms. A school may still provide education, but students increasingly learn through algorithmically recommended content. A newspaper may still publish political analysis, but the circulation of that analysis depends on platform visibility.

Algorithms are therefore invisible cultural institutions. They are invisible not because they are absent, but because their operations are often hidden behind interfaces. Users see the feed, not the ranking logic. They see the recommendation, not the data profile. They see the search result, not the classification system. They experience the outcome without understanding the process.

This invisibility produces a new form of authority. Traditional institutions often declared their authority openly. A priest, teacher, judge, parent, or editor occupied a recognizable social position. Algorithmic authority is more diffuse. It appears as convenience, personalization, relevance, or efficiency. It does not always command; it suggests. It does not always prohibit; it deprioritizes. It does not always censor; it hides. It does not always persuade directly; it reorganizes the environment in which persuasion occurs.

This makes algorithmic power culturally powerful. It shapes conduct while appearing neutral. It influences meaning while appearing technical. It organizes attention while appearing personalized.

Critical algorithm studies have shown that such systems are never purely objective. They reflect the assumptions, data structures, economic incentives, and institutional priorities embedded within them (Beer, 2017; Bucher, 2018; Noble, 2018). When algorithms classify people, recommend content, rank information, or predict behavior, they participate in social ordering. Their classifications may reproduce inequality, reinforce stereotypes, intensify polarization, or commodify identity.

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Noble (2018) demonstrates that search engines and algorithmic systems can reproduce racial and gendered forms of oppression. This is not a secondary issue but a central anthropological problem because classification is one of the ways societies produce order. When algorithmic classification becomes part of everyday life, the politics of classification becomes part of culture itself.

From an anthropological perspective, algorithms should therefore be studied as institutions of cultural mediation. They transmit values, regulate participation, create hierarchies, and define symbolic legitimacy. They are among the most powerful cultural infrastructures of digital civilization.

7. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ALGORITHMIC CULTURE

Algorithmic culture is not neutral. It is deeply connected to political economy. Most algorithmic systems that shape everyday digital experience are owned and operated by corporations whose business models depend on data extraction, attention capture, advertising, prediction, and behavioral influence. As Zuboff (2019) argues, contemporary digital capitalism transforms human experience into behavioral data that can be analyzed, predicted, and monetized.

This has major cultural consequences. In algorithmic culture, attention becomes currency. Emotion becomes data. Preference becomes prediction. Identity becomes a market category. Social behavior becomes a resource. Culture itself becomes an economic field of extraction.

Recommendation systems are often optimized not for truth, wisdom, or social well-being, but for engagement. Content that provokes anger, fear, desire, envy, or fascination may circulate more effectively because it holds attention. The result is an affective economy in which emotional intensity becomes structurally rewarded. The algorithm does not necessarily care whether a person becomes wiser, calmer, or more ethically responsible. It cares whether the person remains engaged.

This does not mean that all algorithmic systems are harmful. They can help users discover knowledge, maintain relationships, access education, navigate cities, find communities, and participate in public life. However, the cultural logic of algorithmic platforms must be examined critically. When engagement becomes the dominant value, cultural experience is reorganized around measurable reaction.

The political economy of algorithmic culture also transforms identity. Individuals are not only citizens, believers, workers, students, parents, or members of communities. They are also data profiles. These profiles may include inferred interests, political tendencies, emotional patterns, consumer habits, mobility routines, aesthetic preferences, and social networks. The person becomes a dividual, fragmented into data points that can be classified and targeted.

This datafied identity may influence what individuals are shown, how they are addressed, what opportunities they receive, and how they are evaluated. Algorithmic culture therefore introduces a new form of inequality: inequality of visibility, classification, and prediction. Some individuals and groups are amplified. Others are rendered invisible. Some are treated as valuable consumers. Others are treated as risks. Some are predicted as desirable. Others are predicted as problematic.

Crawford (2021) further shows that artificial intelligence should not be understood only as immaterial computation. AI depends on extractive infrastructures, labor regimes, environmental costs, resource consumption, and geopolitical power relations. This perspective is important because algorithmic culture is often experienced through smooth interfaces while its material and political conditions remain hidden. The apparent immateriality of the digital conceals mines, data centers, workers, energy infrastructures, and corporate systems of control.

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Rouvroy and Berns (2013) describe this broader condition as algorithmic governmentality, in which social reality is increasingly captured, anticipated, and governed through data-driven correlation rather than traditional normative categories. This form of power does not always discipline subjects by direct command. It governs by prediction, modulation, and environmental adjustment. It acts before the subject fully acts, transforming future possibilities into manageable probabilities.

The political economy of algorithmic culture also affects collective memory. Platforms decide which memories return as reminders, which images circulate, which historical events trend, and which narratives remain searchable. Memory becomes partially automated. The past is not only remembered by communities; it is resurfaced by systems.

Thus, the algorithmic organization of culture is inseparable from power. To study digital civilization anthropologically is to study how cultural meanings are produced within infrastructures of economic interest, technical design, institutional control, and symbolic exchange.

8. DIGITAL CIVILIZATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL REALITY

Digital civilization is not merely a civilization that uses digital tools. It is a civilization in which digital systems participate in the construction of social reality. This distinction is crucial. A tool is something humans use within a pre-existing cultural world. An infrastructure is something that helps organize the world itself.

Algorithms have become infrastructural. They shape the conditions under which information is encountered, relationships are maintained, identities are expressed, reputations are built, and communities are formed. Social reality increasingly appears through interfaces. The screen becomes a cultural threshold. Through it, the individual enters a world of images, messages, rankings, recommendations, conflicts, memories, and desires.

This transformation affects the meaning of community. Traditional communities were often based on geography, kinship, religion, occupation, ethnicity, or shared institutions. Digital communities may be based on interest, affect, ideology, fandom, trauma, lifestyle, consumption, or algorithmic grouping. Individuals may feel stronger belonging to an online community than to their physical neighborhood. They may share intimate experiences with strangers while remaining emotionally distant from those nearby.

This does not mean that digital communities are false. Anthropologically, communities are real when they produce belonging, obligation, shared meaning, and emotional investment. Digital communities do precisely this. However, they are shaped by platform architectures that influence interaction. The form of community is therefore inseparable from the technical environment in which it appears.

Digital civilization also transforms authority. In earlier cultural systems, authority was often connected to age, tradition, education, religious status, institutional position, or legal power. In algorithmic culture, authority may emerge through visibility, virality, follower count, platform verification, ranking, and recommendation. A person becomes credible not only because of expertise but because of circulation. Visibility can imitate legitimacy.

This produces a crisis of cultural authority. Experts, institutions, influencers, anonymous users, artificial intelligence systems, and automated accounts may appear within the same informational environment. The algorithmic feed collapses distinctions between knowledge, opinion, propaganda, entertainment, advertising, and emotional expression. The user must interpret reality within a field where visibility does not necessarily correspond to truth.

Digital civilization also transforms temporality. Algorithmic culture accelerates the rhythm of social life. Trends emerge and disappear rapidly. Outrage cycles intensify and fade. Memories are resurfaced automatically. The present

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becomes unstable, constantly interrupted by notifications and updates. The algorithmic human lives in a time structure shaped by immediacy and recurrence.

Anthropologically, this means that digital civilization is producing a new experience of reality: personalized, accelerated, datafied, affective, and platform-mediated.

9. ANTHROPOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The rise of algorithmic culture requires anthropology to expand its field of analysis. Culture can no longer be studied only through villages, cities, tribes, nations, religious communities, families, workplaces, or physical rituals. These remain important, but they are no longer sufficient. Contemporary culture is increasingly produced through hybrid environments in which physical and digital life are interwoven.

Digital anthropology must therefore examine platforms as cultural spaces, algorithms as mediating agents, interfaces as symbolic environments, and data infrastructures as systems of social classification. The ethnographer of digital civilization must ask new questions. How do people interpret algorithmic recommendations? How do they explain visibility and invisibility? How do they experience being watched, measured, ranked, or predicted? How do they resist algorithmic classification? How do they produce identity through platforms? How do digital rituals reorganize belonging? How do artificial intelligence systems alter trust, authority, creativity, intimacy, and memory?

These questions require methodological innovation. Traditional ethnography remains valuable, but it must be adapted to digital environments. Participant observation may include online communities, platform practices, digital archives, and human-machine interaction. Interviews may explore how individuals understand algorithmic influence. Interface analysis may examine how platforms guide behavior. Critical data studies may reveal how classification systems produce social consequences.

Anthropology must also reconsider agency. Algorithms do not possess human consciousness, intention, or moral responsibility. Yet they have effects. They organize possibilities. They influence action. They participate in social ordering. This requires a relational understanding of agency, similar to approaches that examine how humans, objects, institutions, technologies, and environments interact in networks of action (Latour, 2005).

Finally, anthropology must address the ethical dimension of digital civilization. If algorithms shape culture, then their design is not merely a technical issue. It is a moral and political issue. Questions of transparency, accountability, bias, manipulation, privacy, data ownership, and human autonomy are also questions of cultural survival. The future of culture will depend not only on what humans believe, but on the systems through which belief, memory, attention, and identity are organized.

10. CONCLUSION

Digital civilization has fundamentally transformed the relationship between human beings and culture. Algorithms are no longer passive technologies hidden behind digital interfaces. They increasingly shape identity, social interaction, symbolic meaning, consumption, morality, memory, attention, and collective behavior. They participate in cultural production by organizing what becomes visible, desirable, relevant, legitimate, and memorable.

This article has argued that the emergence of algorithmic culture requires anthropology to rethink the human subject. The concept of the algorithmic human describes the contemporary individual whose identity and everyday practices

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are continuously negotiated through interaction with intelligent digital systems. This human being does not cease to be biological, emotional, historical, or cultural. However, the conditions under which this human being encounters culture are increasingly computationally mediated.

The article has also argued that algorithms function as invisible cultural institutions. They transmit values, regulate visibility, organize knowledge, influence moral judgment, and shape social recognition. Their power lies not only in what they command, but in how they structure the environment in which human choices are made.

The future of anthropology depends on its ability to understand this transformation. Just as industrialization required anthropology and sociology to reconsider labor, class, migration, and urban life, artificial intelligence and algorithmic culture now require scholars to reconsider culture itself. The central anthropological question is no longer only how humans produce culture. It is also how culture is produced with, through, and sometimes by algorithmic systems.

The future human may not simply live within culture. Increasingly, culture itself may be generated, organized, filtered, and reproduced through algorithms. Understanding this transformation is one of the most urgent tasks of contemporary anthropology, media studies, and the human sciences.

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